

## STATEMENT OF SEN. BERNIE SANDERS

AUGUST 23, 2012

I am proud to be here with General Tom Drew and the men and women of the Vermont National Guard, and very happy to welcome EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson to Vermont. Lisa Jackson, as the head of the EPA, has spearheaded some of the most significant environmental initiatives in our nation's history and I am very proud of the work she has done.

**Fuel Economy** - Under her leadership, and the leadership of President Obama, we have set our nation on a path to double the fuel economy for our cars and trucks so that we get to an average of 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025. This is a huge step forward on energy policy in America. It means drivers will save thousands of dollars a year at the gas pump, we will make very significant cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, and we will save over 2.2 million barrels of oil per day once these standards are fully implemented. That is more oil than we import from Saudi Arabia and Iraq combined. This is a very big deal – thank you Administrator Jackson.

**Clean Air** – Everyone understands that dirty air contributes to disease, especially for children and those already suffering from serious health ailments. That is why the EPA is moving aggressively to clean up our air and clamp down on soot and mercury and other toxic pollution. This is not just an environmental issue it is an important health care issue as well. The EPA's recently announced air toxics standards are projected to prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths per year, as well as 130,000 asthma attacks. By cleaning up the air and preventing disease we

will save billions every year on health care costs. In fact, studies show that for every dollar invested in toxic pollution controls we'll see up to \$9 back in health care savings and economic benefits.

**Carbon Emissions** - Last but not least, the EPA, thanks to a 2007 Supreme Court ruling, has the authority to move forward with initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act, and that is exactly what they have done. Within the last year the EPA has put in place standards that ensure that new large power plants will use modern technology to be energy efficient and reduce emissions. As someone who understands the implications of global warming and very much wants to see us reverse it, this is a very important step forward.

Perhaps not as well known is that the EPA has been working with the Department of Defense to help make our military bases more sustainable when it comes to energy and water use. As Chairman of the Senate Green Jobs Subcommittee, I held a hearing with leaders from the Army, Navy, and Air Force as well as the EPA to discuss that partnership and I am very impressed with the military's work in this area.

**Vermont National Guard** – And that is why we are here today. The Vermont National Guard deserves recognition as a model for what we can accomplish at military bases across this country in terms of sustainable energy. Here in Vermont our National Guard has installed a geothermal heating system, cutting their reliance on fossil-fuel heating.

Further, I have been delighted to work with the Vermont National Guard to install a 1.45 megawatt solar energy project here at this base. This project supported jobs for Vermont solar businesses and installers, and uses panels made in

America. This project includes solar panels that are ground-mounted and roof-mounted, and also solar trackers. This is, to my knowledge, the second-largest National Guard solar energy installation in the nation, and one of the largest solar projects in the state of Vermont.

This project is estimated to save hundreds of thousands of dollars annually on the Guard's energy bills, and provide up to 40 percent of the electricity needs at the base.

The good news is we now have data that shows the Guard's solar panels have been outperforming expectations. In the last three months, the solar project has generated 681 megawatt hours of electricity, over 11 percent more electricity produced than was expected by the Guard. In just the last three months, this project saved the Guard more than \$82,000 on their electric bills. That is substantial, and we know we can do this at bases all around the country.

Our National Guard is a model for the military and for businesses as well that want to invest in energy efficiency and sustainable energy to save money and cut greenhouse gas emissions. I want to thank General Drew and the Vermont National Guard for hosting us today, and I want to thank Administrator Lisa Jackson for joining us in Vermont and for her good work.